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 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Roll-on Roll-off Basrah berth turned over to the Iraqi Port Authority

By Mohammed Aliwi
 Gulf Region South District

BASRAH, Iraq -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region South district has completed and turned over the Roll-on / Roll-off berth of Umm Qasr Port in Basrah Province on Sept. 25 to the Iraqi Port Authority.

Known as RoRo, the \$2.7 million project doubles the number of the ships that can dock and unload simultaneously. Rebecca Wingfield, GRS project engineer with Thi Qar Resident Office, said that mean more goods delivered and more income for the port and its workers.

"Another aspect of this project is that it was Iraqi designed and constructed. The Iraqi people can be proud of this project because it is theirs alone. The Corps funded the project and provided guidance and project management to see this project through to completion," she said.

Natalie Sudman, project manager with GRS and the former project engineer on RoRo explained the scope of the project. "The objective of this project was to design and construct a second Roll-On/Roll-Off berth facility at north port and jetty fenders at berth 5 at the Umm Qasr Port and replace existing fenders to enhance berth protection and energy absorption," she said.

"The contract of this project was awarded on Dec. 17, 2005 and the benefi-



A forklift drives off a RoRo ship onto the new RoRo berth. The vehicle deck which runs the entire length of the vessel makes loading and unloading swift. (USACE photo)

cial occupancy of the berth occurred on July 31, 2007 when a ship was berthed," Sudman said. The contract was modified for a time extension for construction due to the necessity of repairing a jetty fender damaged during a storm in the construction phase.

"The RoRo will double the port's cargo capacity from RoRo ships, where it will duplicate the facilities, which are currently being used to load and unload ships. For the shipper the RoRo vessel offers a number of advantages over traditional ships, notably speed," Sudman said. "As the name of the system implies, cars and lorries can drive straight onto a RoRo ship at one port and off at the port on the other



The RoRo doubles the Umm Qasr port's cargo capacity from RoRo ships. (USACE photo)

side of the sea within a few minutes of the ship docking. The best-known RoRo ships are ferries designed to transport commercial vehicles and private cars, together with large numbers of passengers, usually on short voyages."

Sudman said that the world RoRo fleet could be subdivided into a number of different types. They include ships designed to carry freight vehicles only, to carry a combination of containers and freight ve-

hicles, or to transport cars without passengers. Freight-only RoRo ships constitute about two thirds of the world RoRo fleet at present.

Wingfield said that the port was using an old, smaller RoRo situated at the north end of the current berthing area of the port. The existing ramp is unable to handle the increasing cargo demands and traffic congestion in the port was a problem because vessels had to wait.

Wingfield said that the project will expand cargo and passenger use of the port which is critical to the Iraqi government, industry and the Multi-National Forces. The new Roll-on / Roll-off berth facility will add additional berth capacity increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Umm Qasr Port. The types of cargo that will be offloaded will be primarily consumer goods (food, cars, electronics...etc.) and passengers with and without automobiles.

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